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TO BONNN BRNAT WASHI MOSCO CAOFF
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DEDIP
BURNING BUSH
FM PARIS
TO DESKBY 060900Z FCOLN
TELNO 142

OF 051743Z FEBRUARY 90
INFO IMMEDIATE BONN, UKDEL NATO, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW,
INFO IMMEDIATE CABINET OFFICE

*A trilateral discussion
would be very helpful
and I believe is urgent*

PERSONAL FOR AMBASSADORS, CABINET OFFICE FOR POWELL NO 10.

WASHINGTON TELNO 276 : DISCUSSION OF GERMAN ISSUES

SUMMARY

1. THE FRENCH WILL WISH TO BE INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS. THEY ARE WORRIED ABOUT GERMAN PRIORITIES. THEY TOO HAVE A SENSE OF URGENCY. THEIR THINKING IS LIKELY TO BE CLOSE TO OURS ON THE PRINCIPLE OF MAINTAINING A STRONG WESTERN ALLIANCE (THOUGH WITH SOME SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES), ON FOUR POWER RESPONSIBILITIES AND ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CSCE PROCESS : AND (DESPITE DIFFERENCES OVER EC INTEGRATION) IN OPPOSING EARLY ACCESSION OF THE GDR TO THE EC.

2. NEED TO KEEP DISCUSSIONS WITH AMERICANS AND FRENCH IN PARALLEL AND COORDINATED, INVOLVING FRENCH AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE STAGE. THE FRENCH MIGHT ACCEPT EARLY TRILATERAL DISCUSSION. YOUR MEETING WITH DUMAS ON 15 FEBRUARY AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO AGREE ON THE WAY FORWARD.

DETAIL

3. YOU WILL KNOW FROM RECENT DIRECT CONTACTS WITH THE FRENCH AND FROM REPORTING FROM HERE THAT THE FRENCH ARE JUST AS CONCERNED AS WE OR THE AMERICANS ABOUT THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE GERMAN REUNIFICATION PROCESS, IF UNCONTROLLED. THEY WILL WISH TO BE FULLY INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE MAJOR ALLIES. WHEN I SAW DUMAS ON 2 FEBRUARY HE SHOWED CLEARLY THAT, GIVEN THE DIFFICULTY OF FRANK DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GERMANS, SOME ALTERNATIVE TO THE QUADRIPARTITE FORUM WAS REQUIRED. THIS REINFORCED THE CASE FOR CLOSER ANGLO-FRENCH BILATERAL CONTACT. I JUDGE, THOUGH WITH LESS THAN TOTAL CONFIDENCE, THAT DUMAS WOULD ACCEPT A TRILATERAL EXERCISE WITH OURSELVES AND THE AMERICANS, DESPITE THE DANGERS OF LEAKAGE, SO LONG AS THIS DID NOT BECOME FORMALISED OR CARRY TOO MUCH OF THE BURDEN. THE FRENCH FEEL THAT THEIR PRESENT BILATERAL CONTACT WITH THE GERMANS IS LESS THAN SATISFACTORY AND WORRY AT THE WAY IN WHICH THE GERMANS ARE GIVING PRIORITY TO REUNIFICATION OVER EVERYTHING ELSE (CF DUMAS'S REMARKS TO ME, PARA 2 OF MY TELNO 139). YET THEY WILL NOT STAND IN THE WAY OF A DETERMINED GERMAN DRIVE TOWARDS REUNIFICATION BECAUSE THEY ARE MORE DEFEATIST THAN WE ARE ABOUT THE CHANCES OF CONTROLLING THE PROCESS.

4. THE FRENCH, AT LEAST AT SENIOR OFFICIAL LEVEL, ALSO SHARE THE US FEELING OF URGENCY. DUFOURCQ TOLD THE MINISTER ON 2 FEBRUARY THAT HE FEARED THAT WE WOULD BE FACED ON OR SOON AFTER 18 MARCH WITH A CLEAR EXPRESSION OF THE GERMAN WILL FOR UNITY, AND THAT UNLESS THE THREE WESTERN ALLIES GOT TO GRIPS COLLECTIVELY WITH THE GERMANS OVER THE ISSUES SOON, THEY WOULD BE OVERWHELMED BY EVENTS.

5. IN TRYING TO PREDICT HOW THE FRENCH WILL REACT TO THE KIND OF PROPOSALS DISCUSSED IN TUR, WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT COORDINATION IN THE FRENCH MACHINE. MITTERRAND CAN MAKE DECISIONS, AND VOICE OPINIONS, WHICH DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE ADVICE OF HIS MOST SENIOR ADVISERS (SOME OF WHOM CAN ALSO BE UNAWARE OF WHAT THEIR PRESIDENT HAS SAID PRIVATELY TO OTHER LEADERS). EVEN DUMAS IS NOT IN PERFECT CONTACT WITH HIS OWN PEOPLE IN THE QUAI. THE FRENCH MINISTREY OF DEFENCE TEND TO EVOLVE THEIR OWN LINE OF THINKING. THE KEY PLAYERS BELOW MITTERRAND ARE LIKELY TO BE DUMAS, BIANCO AND VEDRINE (BIANCO TODAY HAS WELCOMED THE CHANCE OF A MEETING WITH SIR ROBIN BUTLER). DUFOURCQ, WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN MEETINGS OF POLITICAL DIRECTORS, ALSO HAS INFLUENCE WITH DUMAS.

6. THE FRENCH CONTINUE TO HOLD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF A STRONG ALLIANCE AND A CONTINUED US PRESENCE IN EUROPE, SURPRISINGLY STRONGLY ON THE LATTER. THEY ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE ROLE OF A UNITED GERMANY WITHIN NATO. THEY ARE DISMAYED AT THE GERMAN WILLINGNESS TO TALK AND ACT WITHOUT THOROUGHLY THINKING THIS QUESTION THROUGH. I BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE IDEAS SKETCHED OUT IN PARA 6(A) OF TUR. BEYOND THAT, THEY WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT STRENGTHENING THE POLITICAL ROLE OF NATO, ESPECIALLY WHILE THAT CONCEPT LACKS CLARITY. THEY ACCEPT, AND HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO, A PROFESSIONAL NATO APPROACH TO ARMS CONTROL, BUT THEY WILL NEED A GOOD DEAL OF PERSUADING IF NATO'S ROLE IS TO EXTEND FURTHER. WHATEVER IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO PRESERVING THE LINK WITH THE UNITED STATES, THEIR INSTINCT WILL BE TO LOOK FIRST FOR A MORE PURELY EUROPEAN WAY FORWARD.

7. THE FRENCH ARE STRONG ON THE NEED TO MAINTAIN FOUR POWER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, THOUGH THEY ARE AWARE THAT THERE WILL BE SEVERE LIMITS TO FOUR POWER LEVERAGE ON THE GERMANIES. THEY TALKS IN GENERAL TERMS ABOUT THE CSCE PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGES IN EUROPE, BUT THEY HAVE SO FAR BEEN UNSPECIFIC (MITTERRAND'S EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION IDEA IS PARTICULARLY AND DELIBERATELY VAGUE): AND THEY HAVE SHOWN A MARKED DISTASTE FOR ALLOWING OTHERS, THROUGH THE CSCE, TO DETRACT FROM FOUR-POWER RESPONSIBILITIES. WHEN MOMPER, IN TALKS IN PARIS ON 1 FEBRUARY, PROPOSED THE IDEA OF A CSCE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE FOUR POWERS, THE TWO GERMANIES AND PERHAPS POLAND, THE FRENCH SIDE WAS QUICK TO POINT OUT THE IMPRACTICALITIES. THEY ALSO SPOKE AGAINST THE IDEA THAT THE 35 MIGHT HAVE A SUPERVISORY ROLE OVER A GERMAN SETTLEMENT, OR DO ANYTHING MORE THAN BLESS A SETTLEMENT REACHED BY OTHER MEANS.

8. THE FRENCH, AS YOU KNOW, DIFFER FROM US IN THEIR ENTHUSIASM FOR ACCELERATED EC INTEGRATION AS A MEANS OF LOCKING THE GERMANS IN TO THEIR EUROPEAN COMMITMENT. WE MUST ALSO BE CAREFUL HOW WE BRING THE FRENCH INTO CLOSE-ALLY DISCUSSIONS OF THE EC ESPECTS OF THE GERMAN QUESTION. THE FRENCH ARE KEENLY AWARE THAT THERE ARE SOME MOST IMPORTANT LONGER-TERM INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES RELATING TO THE COMMUNITY'S INTERNAL POLITICAL BALANCE WHICH COULD BE AFFECTED BY SHORT-TERM DECISIONS ON EC/GDR. THEY WOULD TAKE IT BADLY IF, FOR INSTANCE, WE SHOWED THAT WE HAD HAD PRIOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE AMERICANS ON EC/GDR RELATIONS. IN THIS AREA AT LEAST, I HOPE THAT WE COULD HAVE A BILATERAL WORD WITH THE FRENCH BEFORE IT IS RAISED ON A TRILATERAL BASIS. VEDRINE'S VISIT TO LONDON ON 7 FEBRUARY PROVIDES AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY.

9. MORE GENERALLY, I SEE A NEED TO PROCEED SO FAR AS POSSIBLE IN PARALLEL IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE US AND FRANCE AT EVERY STAGE, SO THAT THE ONE DOES NOT GET OUT OF LINE WITH THE OTHER. YOUR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS WITH DUMAS WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES, ESPECIALLY THAT ON 15 FEBRUARY WHEN I HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO GO DEEP INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ISSUES AND TO ENDORSE A TIMEFRAME AND METHODS FOR ADDRESSING THEM WITH THE US AND THE GERMANS, SEPARATELY OR TOGETHER. SEEN FROM HERE, A TRILATERAL DISCUSSION BEFORE LONG COULD BE HELPFUL.

10. FCO PLEASE ADVANCE TO PUS, WESTON (POLITICAL DIRECTOR), GOULDEN AND KERR.

FERGUSSON

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